



Minutes City Council Education, Technology & Economic Development Committee July 1, 2008

Minutes of the Council Education, Technology and Economic Development Committee, Technology and Economic Development portion, held on July 1, 2008, 3:00 p.m., in the 3rd Floor Conference Room, Tempe City Hall, 31 E. 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

Council Committee Member Present:

Councilmember Onnie Shekerjian, Chair
Councilmember Barb Carter

City Staff Present:

Cheryl Danna, IT Bus Analyst
Shelley Hearn, Comm Rel Mgr
Jan Hort, City Clerk
Charlie Meyer, City Manager
Gene Obis, IT Mgr
Sheri Partridge, Council Aide
Alex Smith, Tech Dev Specialist
Ron Smith, IT Dir of Applications
Sheri Wakefield-Saenz, Econ Dev Admin
Mark Wittenburg, IT/Tech Services

Guests Present:

Karen Poole, MCCCCD, Assoc. Director
Sandy Reinhardt, IT Dir, Tempe Elementary School District

Chair Shekerjian called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m. and announced that this will be Councilmember Carter's last committee meeting. She thanked her for her service and guidance to the committee.

Technology

Agenda Item #1 – Public Appearances

None.

Agenda Item #2 – Approval of Minutes for June Meeting

This item was tabled. Councilmembers Shekerjian and Carter will notify the City Clerk with any changes in the Minutes before they are submitted to Council for approval.

Agenda Item #3 – IB Sponsorship Program Update

Sheri Wakefield-Saenz stated that the approach to outreach will be the next step.

Councilmember Shekerjian stated that the school district will need to build on the second year grant.

Agenda Item #4 – Citizen Relationship Management System

Ron Smith presented a report highlighting the following:

Section 1 - City practices information obtained from the National League of Cities

Section 2 – Listing of current cities using a 311 non-emergency call system. Many cities have adopted this system. Each 311 system is backed up by a CRM product and the report provides an overview of what is available.

Section 3 – Overview of the Urbandale, Iowa, system. The vendor, Request Partners, was one of the vendors that Ted Hoffman spoke of at the last meeting. The system is fairly easy to use, is relatively inexpensive and would need about one year to implement.

Section 4 – CRM Buying Guide that explains the timeline for going out for a bid.

Section 5 – Hosted vs. In-House Product. This explains the differences. Many are moving to the hosted product because it does limit the cost and start-up time. It also provides an opportunity to test it on a small scale. There are many companies that host products.

Councilmember Carter asked the size of the cities using the hosted products.

Mr. Smith responded that it varies. Urbandale has a population of about 3800, but there are larger cities that use them as well.

Shelley Hearn noted that the Urbandale system allows someone to go on line and log a request. She understood the desire was for an internal complaint tracking system to track an incoming call, how it was resolved, how long it took, and where it is in the system, and when a complaint of a similar nature comes in, history is available to see how others were handled. Currently, one Council Communicator message might need three or four different departments to respond, and it is simply sent out with a note that the designated people will respond. It would be good to coordinate.

Mr. Smith responded that all of the products would have a workflow piece set up by someone internally and the tracking information would be available.

Ms. Hearn verified that it could come from a phone call, an email, or whatever process is in place.

Mr. Smith stated that the 311 system works in this way. It is basically a call center backed up by an IT application, and when someone calls in, that information is entered and that information is routed to the appropriate departments and tracked in a database.

Councilmember Shekerjian verified that any of these could be customized. We could take all the different ways we gather input from the community, not just from this system, but from the Police Department and Public Works. We were looking for a customer relations management tool, but we were also looking for the ability not just to track, but also to take in all the data received and graph it geographically to identify "hot" neighborhoods, for example, that might need help. It would help us be proactive.

Mr. Smith added that most of these products would handle that. Many have a GIS component that would provide a thematic map. There is a product called "City Commander" and it is more of a portfolio/project/incident management system that provides evaluation score cards, as well as a thematic map of what is happening. There may be other products that are closer to what we want other than just the customer relationship management.

Councilmember Shekerjian stated that the desire was to look at the CRMs. A lot of data comes in and there's no one point where it is placed under one umbrella.

Mr. Smith added that City Commander system does allow crunching of the numbers of all the data.

Ms. Hearn asked if the Police Department is already using such a system.

Mr. Smith responded that they have a variety of systems to provide numbers, but not one specific system.

Councilmember Shekerjian added that they have a score card of how they do, but she didn't know how they track the other kinds of incidents. In looking at the project timeline, the first step is "requirements gathering." Is that a needs assessment of what we want?

Mr. Smith responded that it would involve all departments coming together to decide what is needed in a system.

Councilmember Shekerjian stated that the report is impressive. It would be helpful to be able to gather data and see that things are completely resolved and have some way to track and generate data. This committee won't be meeting in August. Therefore, between now and September, she suggested that this project be put on hold.

Councilmember Carter suggested placing this on the agenda for the Council Summit to discuss the subject and see if it is something to be pursued.

Ms. Hearn added that Brenda Buren is putting together an interdepartmental team to work on some of the community issues. That team could be used to determine what would be the most useful tool.

Mr. Smith stated that he would meet with Ms. Buren.

Councilmember Shekerjian summarized that Ms. Hearn will get feedback from other departments about how this should work. Councilmember Shekerjian will make sure this is brought up at the Summit and as the Council committees move forward, we can see how that plays out.

Agenda Item #5 – Server to web based IT system

Mark Wittenburg stated that he looked at the three criteria: features, feasibility and cost, as well as the opportunities available.

Features:

- Most companies, including Google, have fairly new applications.
- There are many features, but they are not as feature-rich as Microsoft Office products.
- They are deploying to the student population, but typically not to the staff.
- Google provides an extended security suite, business continuity, and collaborative opportunities through virtualized storage and open APIs (tool sets that are open to develop applications with Google). They also have software sets for doing video integration. They also recently purchased Grand Central, a centralized system for contact information.

Feasibility:

- “Cloud Computing” moves information storage and processing from the enterprise internal network to the web. Currently, there are not a lot of tools for moving that.
- In order to move today, we would have to set a cut-off date where all email would go to Google Apps and we wouldn’t be able to move or migrate existing data to the new system.
- Another issue is that, although we own the data, there are no tools if we were to decide to move back.
- The benefit is vendor autonomy. Even though we would use Google, the internet is made up of different vendors, so there isn’t a single reliance on Microsoft.
- There is a seamless integration to move to Google Tools and the collaboration because it is all stored in a centralized location.

Cost

- Comparing the cost of migrating the City’s infrastructure to Google Mail from Microsoft Exchange, with a seven-year snapshot of everything that has been spent on Exchange, the yearly cost for Google would be about twice what we are spending today.

Opportunities

- For our public infrastructure, we use Microsoft Office at the Library, and we don’t offer any type of email to the public.
- ASU is migrating their student population to Google Apps and Google Mail and this seems like a great fit as far as deploying this and testing the applications deployed in our public infrastructure.
- It is free of charge and it would save money on licensing.

Councilmember Shekerjian asked who he contacted at Google.

Mr. Wittenburg responded that he talked with David Molachek, Google technical support.

Councilmember Shekerjian asked why the District of Columbia went this route and why they are integrating it across their 38,000 employee population over the next year. Why would it benefit them, but not benefit the City?

Mr. Wittenburg explained that the District of Columbia uses consultants to manage their email system. Typically, consultants run about \$150 to \$350 per hour to support the system. For our system, it takes about one-quarter of a system analyst at about \$90K per year to maintain the system. They had 10 consultants working on their system.

Councilmember Shekerjian asked, in terms of municipalities, where he saw “cloud computing” going.

Mr. Wittenburg responded that “cloud computing” will be the direction of the industry. It is important to look at the business benefits. With the infrastructure, even though we would not be maintaining servers, we would be maintaining a more complex internet connection. It will probably be three to five years before it is feasible.

Councilmember Shekerjian asked about the feasibility of using Google Apps in the future. What would be the best course of action in terms of monitoring this and making sure this is a viable option?

Mr. Wittenburg stated that the Library would be a good test bed because we would be able to monitor the development of the application. We have a good handle on the features and functionality that the staff uses out of Microsoft Office and we would work closely with ASU and watch their progress as well and make sure we are keeping an eye on the technology.

Councilmember Shekerjian suggested assessing it annually and reporting on the status to this committee or whatever new committee is appropriate. She also asked him to keep in touch with the District of Columbia and watch their assessment.

Agenda Item #6 – Workforce and Education Forum

Dr. Alex Smith reported that the date has been set for October 8, and that the text for the invitation is with Molly Enright in the Mayor’s Office. The invitation image is ready to go out next week. The room and caterer have been booked, the RSVP line is ready, and email will be tracked. We will finalize the agenda with the committee in the next 60 days.

Councilmember Shekerjian asked that Councilmember Carter be invited.

Agenda item #7 – “Smart Place To Be” / Digital Divide Education Focus Group

Sheri Wakefield-Saenz summarized that a successful first meeting was held. There were representatives from Rio Salado College, as well as representatives from ASU’s Career Services, Tempe Elementary School District and Tempe Union High School District. The “show-and-tell” aspect was informative and featured accomplishments and best practices. There were targeted focused education agendas that moved students along a track to accomplish education and career goals.

Next Steps:

- Everyone will return in a month with a one-page listing of their accomplishments and that will be put into a common format and an on-line booklet will be generated, as well as a hard copy to be used in marketing kits.
- Determine how to work cooperatively to outreach to businesses going forward and determine ways to jointly market the assets we have.

Councilmember Shekerjian added that the digital divide education portion is something for which we wanted to use the same people. That came out of a discussion with Jamie at Google. Google allows their employees to work 20% of their time on charity or non-profit projects. They are passionate about reducing the digital divide in individual students. She would like to use this group to brainstorm that issue. She also suggested bringing Jamie into that meeting so that he could talk about the needs. Also, the group could explore various connects to help students.

Karen Poole offered the assistance of Maricopa County Community College District.

Agenda Item #8 – Future Agenda items

- Each member should think of 3 to 5 things the City can advance in technical/education areas.
- Councilmember Carter suggested that information on the good things going on within the City needs to be directed to Nikki Ripley for release to the public.

Councilmember Carter added that she has enjoyed working with the Committee. The Committee has had a very ambitious work plan and has accomplished a lot.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Prepared by: Connie Krosschell
Reviewed by: Shelley Hearn

Jan Hort
City Clerk